



PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE PETRO  
POROSHENKO

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# We came to work on the fait accompli - meeting of the President with the Exarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Ukraine

17 September 2018 - 15:10



President Petro Poroshenko had a meeting with the Exarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Ukraine - Bishop Ilarion of Edmonton and the Western Eparchy of the UOC in Canada and Archbishop Daniel of Pamphylia and the Western Eparchy of the UOC in the United States of America.

The Head of State emphasized that the beginning of the mission of the Exarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Ukraine, Archbishop Daniel and Bishop Ilarion, is an extremely important event for all Orthodox people in Ukraine. "It is also extremely important that I can speak to you in Ukrainian. This is a huge pleasure and understanding that Ukraine has a big part in your heart," the President added.



"I am very grateful to His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for the courage and wisdom shown with your appointment," the President said. "We know that Ukrainians have prayed for hundreds of years to have the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. The views of Ukrainians were aimed at the Mother Church, Constantinople. It is wonderful that the Lord heard our prayers," Petro Poroshenko said.

The President stressed a long way had been passed over the last three years: "And in the framework of this way, we can say now that we have come to the finish line. This is an extremely enjoyable news".

The Head of State recalled the celebration of the 1030th anniversary of the Baptism of Kyivan Rus'-Ukraine when hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians took part in the Cross Procession. "And before that, there were hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian believers who prayed together for the Lord to give us the Autocephalous Orthodox Church," he said.

"If you look at the faces of people who then walked in the procession, they were all filled with joy, peace and grace, waiting for the Autocephalous Orthodox Church to come to Ukraine and become a symbol of the unification of the country, peace, goodness, which would finally contribute to the unification of the Orthodox faith and the Ukrainian state," the President noted.

"It is extremely important that we have one more state-building foundation - the Autocephalous Orthodox Church," Petro Poroshenko emphasized and thanked the Exarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Ukraine for their great personal contribution to the provision of autocephaly to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

"We were looking forward to meet you. I am extremely grateful for the fact that we can pray together so that the Lord may send us this great joy," the President added and wished the success of the mission of the Patriarchal Exarchs in Ukraine.

Archbishop Daniel noted that almost a month had passed since his last visit to Ukraine.

"This time we arrived in Ukraine with an extraordinary mission, we personally represent Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and at the same time the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in order to continue working on the fait accompli that the beginning of the process of granting autocephaly to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church has begun. We are on the straight line that goes to the finish line," Archbishop Daniel said.



"We have much work to do," he said, adding that he cannot agree with the statements by some mass media that the appointment of Exarchs will divide the Ukrainian

Orthodoxy. "On the contrary, (we arrived - ed.) in order to take even more steps to bring unity for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church," Archbishop Daniel underlined.

He noted that the Exarchs are ready for the clear cooperation with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate, as well as for the dialogue with the UOC in the bosom of the Russian Orthodox Church, with the UAOC. "We have no reasons not to meet with representatives of different religious organizations, listen to their opinions and constructively cooperate with them," the Archbishop said.

In turn, Bishop Ilarion read the letter of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to the President.

"It is with particular joy and spiritual exaltation that we would like to inform you that in the framework of the already initiated process of giving the long-awaited status of autocephaly to the Christ-loving Ukrainian people, the Holy Synod unanimously decided at the last meeting to appoint His Eminence Archbishop Daniel of Pamphylia from the United States and His Eminence Bishop Ilarion of Edmonton from Canada, both serving in the respective countries to the Ukrainian Orthodox believers under the canonical intercession and spiritual care of the Constantinople Mother Church, Exarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Ukraine," the letter reads.

"This remarkable historic decision of the First Orthodox Church will definitely contribute to the processes of granting

autocephaly, which we pray for and work over day and night. With this joyful message from the Constantinople Mother Church, the First Orthodox Church, we warmly congratulate you on faith in the wonderful process that we, together with you, have initiated for the spiritual prosperity and independence of the Christ-loving and long-suffering Ukraine," the letter reads.



Archbishop Daniel also informed that several meetings had already been set up with various representatives of religious organizations.

The Head of State thanked Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for this letter and stressed that he was touched by the words of His All-Holiness: "I ask to convey the words

of my personal gratitude and gratitude of the entire Ukrainian Orthodox people to His All-Holiness. The Lord hears our prayers".

The President stressed that the church should be separated from the state and especially from a foreign state. "And to date, the influence of a foreign state convinces us even more of the correctness of our actions," he noted.

"I sincerely wish success, Your Eminence, to your extremely important mission. We pray that it will lead to an appropriate decision as soon as possible. And from our part we will do everything to enable you to communicate with all religious communities. We will do everything to ensure that this long-awaited decision is taken," Petro Poroshenko said. He also noted that he would prepare a letter in response to the Ecumenical Patriarch.



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